

Bookies BULLETIN



AUSTRALIAN
BOOKKEEPERS
NETWORK

- JOBKEEPER LOOPHOLE?
- STP2 COMING TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU!
- IN 2021, YOU UPGRADED YOUR WEBSITE

....and much more!

2021
EDITION 1

contents

- 2 DIRECTORS CORNER
- 3 WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?
- 5 JOBKEEPER LOOPHOLE?
- 7 STP2 COMING SOON TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU
- 8 NUTS AND BOLTS
- 12 IN 2021, YOU UPGRADED YOUR WEBSITE
- 13 FIVE MINUTES WITH... MELANIE GODSELL

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this edition is current as at time of writing (Feb 2021). Information contained herein is general in nature and is intended to provide guidance to bookkeepers in providing bookkeeping services for their clients. It is not intended to be taken as a substitute for you or your clients seeking professional advice in relation to their own specific circumstances.

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We've Missed You!

I was recently reflecting on how many Zoom and Teams meetings I have had in the past 12 months, versus what was the norm pre Covid. Where would we have been had we not had access to these online connection platforms – how could we have continued to keep our businesses and our clients' businesses ticking during lockdowns? Zoom and Teams are both relatively young with Zoom having been around about 7 years and Teams about half of that. Perhaps had Covid visited us earlier we would have instead used something like conference calls, skype or facebook, but certainly there is no doubt these platforms have been an absolute life saver for many during this time.

In saying that, now I am hearing the terms "I'm zoomed out" or "I've got online fatigue" or "I want a real coffee not a virtual one" or "get me away from this computer". I'm sure you can all relate. While moving our worlds on-line was a necessity and the lifeline that kept some businesses connected, which was a lifeblood for those, we are now shifting to this craving for in person meetings and events again. Oh please when can we go to a face to face event!!

The ABN team have certainly missed being out and about over the past 12 months and I am sure a lot of you have also missed many of the wonderful events that you may have been a regular at in previous years. Last year we had to defer our October 2020 Bookkeeper Event and at that time we hoped to be able to bring it to you in June 2021. Unfortunately, we have had to make the difficult decision to again delay the event and not proceed with the June 2021 date. I can hear your disappointed voices and we are sorry - you should have seen the disappointment on the ABN teams faces when we made this decision. We are a national body and we love our members in every state and territory! With different Premiers and border rules in operation, and border restrictions which are announced with so little notice and of course most importantly ensuring the safety of all of our members, this is really the only decision that can be made.

One thing we can promise at this time is that The Bookkeeper Event will be back as soon as it is possible! In the meantime, The ABN Team are working on ideas of other ways we can safely connect at events while learning and networking with our peers. So stay tuned and we will see you "in person" as soon as we are able.

Kellie Powell





what have you done for me lately?

ABN NEVER STOPS
WORKING FOR ITS
MEMBERS.
HERE IS WHAT WE
ARE UP TO OF LATE!



Giving You Technical Guidance

In February, we sent you the latest edition of our monthly publication [Getting Technical](#). Although ABN already provides a wealth of in-depth technical material for members, we appreciate that from time to time, very specific technical issues arise that you may need guidance on. [Getting Technical](#) fills that space. This latest edition dealt with the calculation of the JobMaker hiring credit, it follows on from the latest edition of [Bookkeepers Knowledge Base](#) which explored the entire JobMaker regime.

Delivering you the best technical resources, that's your ABN.

continued



Industry News And Views – Bookkeeper Radio!

Have you checked out the latest episode of [Bookkeeper Radio](#)?

In our most recent episode, we caught up with our resident tax guru, ABN Director Darren Hagarty, who demystified companies for our listeners. Darren ran through the advantages and disadvantages of this style of business structure, how dividends are taxed, some upcoming changes in the company law space, and much more.

Hosted each month by our very own DJs, Peter Thorp and Kelvin Deer! ABN's [Bookkeeper Radio](#) offers a unique and insightful look at your industry. For each broadcast, see and hear your hosts interview a prominent industry figure and then give you the opportunity to ask your own questions. It's a fun, free and interactive way to keep up with industry news and views. View a free sample [here](#).



Networking Opportunities

[Coffee Clubs](#) have started to fire up for another year.

[Coffee Clubs](#) are a community where bookkeepers can connect in what can be an otherwise isolating industry. Meet other like-minded people, share your knowledge, learn from others, and keep up to date with industry developments. You are only a [Coffee Club](#) meeting away from building your own professional network of friends and creating long-lasting relationships with your industry peers. To find out when the next [Coffee Club](#) is being held near you, subscribe to our [Notification List](#).



The Online Coffee Club

Our own Online Coffee Club sessions have begun again in 2021!

This online version of our traditional Coffee Club is designed to work alongside the original. During these tough COVID-19 times we understand not everyone can make it to a face to face meeting. We encourage our readers to get along to a traditional Coffee Club as the interaction with your peers is invaluable! However for those of you who can't, we've got you covered with the Online version! Tune in once a month and gain some valuable CPE as we talk to our Network Leaders about all things Bookkeeping!



Radio-Active

Tune in at 3:30pm (Brisbane Time) for our new [Bookkeeper Radio](#) Segment "Radio-Active"! We discuss some bookkeeping news and get you, our listeners "on air" to get your views on a topic or two! We've also got magpie facts and an interactive poll to see what the community thinks. This is a fun, casual and interactive experience to get your warmed up for the main Bookkeeper Radio show! Come check it out!





JOBKEEPER LOOPHOLE?

A recent Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) case potentially opens the door for more clients to access the JobKeeper payment.

Background

Announced in early 2020 in response to the anticipated job losses caused by COVID-19, the JobKeeper scheme is one of the most expensive single policies in federal government history. One of those key criteria for JobKeeper, is that the entity must have had an ABN by 12 March 2020. This is to prevent entities exploiting the scheme by establishing themselves after the program's announcement. However, the recent AAT case of *Apted and Commissioner of Taxation [2020] AATA 5139* (21 December 2020) indicates that the 12 March ABN requirement may be flexible depending on the circumstances at hand.

Facts

- The sole trader taxpayer provided valuation services in the real estate industry. He originally operated as a sole trader obtaining his ABN back in 2012, and then reactivating it in 2014 after having ceased operating under another ABN in a partnership with his wife (at all times providing valuation and property services).
- In 2018, the taxpayer retired and cancelled his ABN registration. However, retirement did not agree with him. He was contacted soon after by a potential client, and he was engaged to provide valuation services in June 2019. He let it be known at this time that he was available to accept new referrals although he decided to focus on retail rental valuations.

- He did not apply to have his ABN reactivated in mid-2019 when he resumed his business. He explained in his statement to the AAT that he thought he was only required to have an ABN if he was to be registered for GST. Since he did not anticipate making more than \$75,000 per year, he did not think he needed to be registered for GST back in June 2019.
- On 31 March 2020, the taxpayer applied online to have his ABN reinstated/reactivated. The taxpayer contacted the ABN registrar by telephone in June 2020 to discuss the date of effect of his registration. After making representations about his business history, the registrar in its statement to the AAT confirmed the ABR was adjusted or corrected to show his ABN was backdated to 1 June 2019 – that is, on or about the date when he had resumed trading.

ATO's arguments

- 12 March 2020 is a 'point-in-time' requirement. That is, at that point in time (on that day) did the taxpayer have an active ABN? At that point in time, he did not. Rather he only had an active ABN at the point in time it was reactivated, irrespective of the time it was backdated to. If a person accessed the ABR on 12 March 2020, they would have found that the taxpayer did not have an active ABN. Therefore, the 12 March 2020 date requirement was not met.

continued



- Counting backdated registrations may enable JobKeeper eligibility to be manipulated because taxpayers would be able to apply for an ABN after 12 March 2020, and then attempt to convince the registrar to backdate their registration.

Taxpayer's arguments

His business was active again from June 2019. This is reflected by the decision of the registrar to backdate the ABN to this date. Therefore, an active ABN was held at this time. The backdated date was not chosen at random but at a point in time that the registrar was satisfied that the taxpayer was actively engaged in an enterprise.

AAT decision

- The Commissioner's position was rejected.
- The taxpayer had an active ABN on or before 12 March 2020 as required. This was reflected by the decision of the registrar to reinstate his ABN effective from June 2019. The intent of JobKeeper is to ensure payments are made to active businesses. Therefore, the JobKeeper legislation should not be, where there is uncertainty, interpreted narrowly to the disadvantage of business. In this case, the taxpayer's business, as found by the registrar, was active in June 2019.
- To put, as the Commissioner argued, that the system could be manipulated (see earlier) is to say that the registrar would not be doing its job properly. Here, the registrar – through its conversations with the taxpayer – was satisfied that an enterprise had resumed in June 2019, and therefore the ABN was backdated to that time.
- The tribunal also noted that, although not required in this case, it does have the power to review the Commissioner's discretion to not allow taxpayers additional time beyond 12 March 2020 to obtain an ABN.

Comment

This decision potentially opens the way for clients (including sole traders) who were actively carrying on an enterprise before 12 March 2020 to receive JobKeeper payments, despite not having an ABN at that actual point in time.

The case also provides guidance around legislative interpretation. That is, legislation that is aimed at assisting taxpayers (in this case, in a time of potential crisis) should not be read narrowly to deny taxpayers that assistance. The purpose of a piece legislation is always important.

Appeal

On 18 January 2021, the Commissioner released an Interim Decision Impact Statement (DIS) announcing his intention to appeal the AAT's decision to the Federal Court. In the DIS the Commissioner stated that the AAT's decision is inconsistent with the Commissioner's view in respect of all key issues considered by the Tribunal. In particular, the Commissioner considers that:

- Whether an entity had an ABN is to be determined by reference to whether an entity had an active ABN on 12 March 2020. That is, it is a point-in-time test and an ABN which has been backdated to have effect on or before 12 March 2020 will not meet the requirement to have had an ABN on 12 March 2020.
- The Commissioner's discretion is not reviewable by the Tribunal, although review could be sought under the Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977.
- A favourable exercise of the discretion is not appropriate based on the reasons given by the Tribunal. The Commissioner's view on when the discretion would be appropriately exercised is outlined in Law Administration Practice Statement [PS LA 2020/1](#) Commissioner's discretion to allow further time for an entity to register for an ABN or provide notice to the Commissioner of assessable income or supplies.

In the meantime, before the outcome of the appeal is known:

- Where an entity's eligibility can otherwise be resolved in a manner favourable to them, those decisions will continue to be made. For example, where an entity did not have an ABN on 12 March 2020 but the Commissioner determines that the entity's circumstances fall within the approach contemplated in [PS LA 2020/1](#).
- The ATO will postpone finalising decisions regarding eligibility for JobKeeper payments in circumstances where it determines that the entity does not satisfy the eligibility criteria but consider they might become eligible depending on the views of the Full Federal Court on the issues in this case. However, if the entity would like the ATO to make a decision over this time, it will do so in line with the ATO view set out in [PS LA 2020/1](#).

The ATO has also sought for the appeal to be expedited. We will keep you updated when the outcome of the appeal is known.

STP2 COMING SOON TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU



BY KERRIE JARIUS (ABA DIRECTOR)

STP 2 is the next iteration of Single Touch Payroll (STP). It builds on the infrastructure developed under STP that has been operational for a couple of years now. Its core purpose is to streamline communication with government departments (other than the ATO) regarding payroll related issues. It also promises certain operational efficiencies such as the scrapping of TFN declarations and Employment Separation Certificates. There are some additional informational benefits for employees and importantly for government it provides them with the tools to improve the administration of the Social Security System.

How does it work? It leverages the STP infrastructure to provide much more detail about an employee's pay including a line-by-line breakdown of wages and salaries. Employees have better oversight over their earnings, the government has access to real time data to assist agencies like ABS CSA and Social Security, and employers get to convert some manual or semi-manual functions into digital ones. In principle, it seems like a positive move if smoothly implemented.

Originally slated to be effective from 1 July 2021 it had become increasingly obvious that the prospective start date was going to be unachievable for a few reasons. Firstly, the software companies were struggling to meet the date. Australian Business Software Industry Association (ABSIA) put a submission to government that they needed more time. Secondly, tax professionals (BAS Agents, tax agents) need sufficient time to understand and implement STP 2 and that is compromised as the software is unavailable.

Australian Bookkeepers Association has joined with the other professional associations to raise a collective voice that advocated a deferral of the 1 July 2021 date. We were successful in the deferral request and the implementation date has been formally deferred until 1 January 2022; a six-month extension. This is a welcome move as 1 July 2021 looked like being a squeeze in terms of the software but for BAS Agents STP 2 would have come on top of the end of financial year crush (payroll reporting, TPAR, EOFY work for clients and accountants).

What if 1 January 2022 is not achievable? The ATO are aware and mindful of not rushing an implementation if there is the risk of poor data integrity. To this end, they have flagged the possibility of further deferrals or staggered start dates as we get closer to 1 January 2022 and the software company rollout timetables have become clearer.

The ATO acknowledge that you may not be able to get all your clients on board on 01.01.2022. Best practice will be to phase your clients into STP2. The ATO recognise that onboarding over a couple of months is a better way to transition your

client base. Deferrals will be available and there is more information to come on the deferral process. You will not be expected to have all your clients ready to go on 01.01.2022.

If we follow the lead from STP 1 then DSPs (software companies) will get deferrals if they are not ready and both agents and individual taxpayers may get deferrals if they do not have sufficient implementation time).

Where to from here? There are a number of aspects to be mindful of as we move toward implementation of STP 2:

- Liaise closely with your software providers to understand their timetables and any educative material;
- Keep an eye on your trusted information providers (professional associations, ATO etc), they should have a strong information flow as we get closer to 1 January 2022; and
- Understand your implementation timelines for STP 2 as this will be helpful if seeking further deferrals becomes necessary.

What's to come:

There will be plenty of information closer to implementation dates. ATO have planned webinars and guidelines to help you transition your clients through STP2. ABN / ABA will be providing information as it comes to hand and will support you through this process. ABA as your association will be an integral part of this process through representation and workshops with the ATO.





NUTS & bolts



ABR Register

Clients (or you on their behalf) should ensure that their business's details are accurate on the ABR register, and update where necessary.

Currently, businesses are requested to provide their main business address (i.e. its physical location), in addition to the postal address. However, the government has identified that ABN holders/applicants are instead listing their tax or BAS agent's address and contact details. Initial data queries in New South Wales and Victoria reveal that hundreds of thousands of businesses have done this. While many may think that that this really doesn't matter (and that it's only important that government departments have the relevant address) it does!

The ABR data is used for disaster management purposes identifying where the most impacted businesses are in order to help and provide support for taxpayers during times of disaster. Further, Government including the ATO also use the register to target certain areas with information campaigns and concessions. It's easy for clients to update the register online, or you can do so on their behalf.

All told, all levels of Government need to identify and contact businesses that may be, or have been, impacted by natural disasters and/or pandemic matters. Incorrect ABR address information also prevents the delivery of vital information, coordination of support efforts and administration of grants and stimulus to businesses at critical times.

On the subject of the ABR register, the registrar is continuing to bulk cancel ABNs where there has been no recent reporting of business income or expenses. If a client has temporarily ceased business but wants their ABN to remain active, you should contact the register to avoid cancellation.

Where are you at?

In the 2020 Christmas rush, you may have missed our Bookies Bulletin feature story by ABN Director Peter Thorp on being a proactive bookkeeper for your clients as we move out of the worst of COVID-19, and government stimulus assistance comes to an end. Peter's article encouraged bookkeepers to approach clients and ask them and assist them in answering the following three questions:

1. Do they know where financially their business is at right now?
2. Do they know how it would have fared but for the COVID-19 government/financial institution/landlord-related assistance?

key DATES

21 March

February monthly Activity Statement - due for lodgement and payment

28 April

Superannuation Guarantee contributions (Jan-Mar) - due for payment

25 May

March Quarterly Activity Statements - due for lodgement and payment (if lodging electronically)

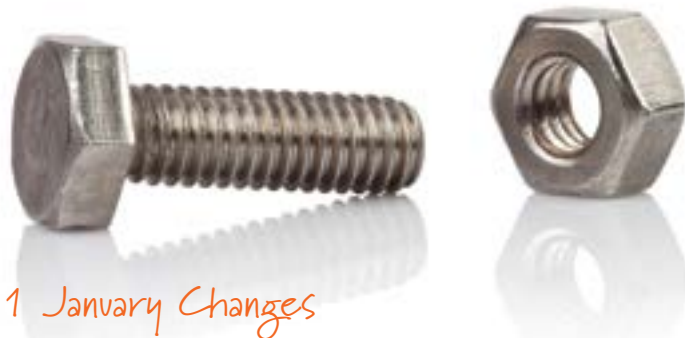
28 May

SG Charge Statement - due for lodgement and payment (where the employer did not meet their SG obligation by 28 April)



continued

NUTS & bolts ●●●●●●●●●●



3. Do you know where you need to be in order to survive and thrive moving forward?

The same exercise should arguably be undertaken with your own business, noting that bookkeepers may have received elevated levels of income and assistance during COVID, not only from the Government, banks and landlords but also perhaps through client reporting and compliance with programs such as JobKeeper, JobMaker, Cashflow boost etc. Ask yourself the above three questions, and work your way through the steps recommended by Peter in his article.

1 January Changes

1. TPB

Some changes to the Tax Agent Services Act 2009 took effect from 1 January 2021. These changes are part of Treasury's regular amendments process to ensure the law operates as intended.

An overview of the law changes affecting registered tax practitioners is summarised in the table below:

Area of Change	Pre-January 2021	From 1 January 2021
PI Insurance	When seeking to renew your registration, you must demonstrate that you maintain, or will be able to maintain, PI insurance that meets TPB requirements	When seeking to renew your registration, you must demonstrate, at the time of applying for renewal, that you maintain PI insurance that meets TPB requirements This law change applies to all renewal applications on hand, but not decided from 1 January 2021
Lodgement of registration renewal application	You must apply to renew your registration at least 30 days before it expires or within a shorter period as the Board allows Once you submit your renewal application, your registration is taken to continue until the application has been decided	You must apply to renew your registration at least 30 days, but not more than 90 days, before your registration expires Once you submit your application, your registration is taken to continue until the application has been decided, or you withdraw your application, whichever occurs first This law change will apply to all renewal applications on hand but not decided from 1 January 2021
Surrender of registration with no formal investigation on foot	If you request to surrender your registration, the Board need not terminate your registration if it considers that due to a current investigation or the outcome of an investigation, it would be inappropriate to do so.	In addition to pre-January 2021 position, the Board may also refuse to accept your surrender request if it starts to investigate you within 30 days of receiving the surrender notice and it considers that it would be inappropriate to terminate your registration.
Service of notices	You must notify the Board if there is a change to your business or email address	You must notify the Board if there is a change in the address for service of notices. Address for service includes a physical, postal or an electronic address given to the Board. If there is more than one address given to the Board, the address for service is one that the Board considers reasonable. If an address for service is not given to the Board, the address for service is the one that the Board reasonably believe is the address.

continued



Area of Change	Pre-January 2021	From 1 January 2021
<p>How documents may be given</p>	<p>No requirements exist</p>	<p>For individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by delivering personally, or • by leaving it at, or posting it to the last known residential or business address of the individual. <p>For a company or partnership entity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by leaving it at, or posting it to the head office, registered office or a principal office of the entity • by sending it to an electronic address for service provided to the Board for the entity. <p>For a company that has a liquidator or an administrator appointed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by leaving it at or posting it to the address of the liquidator or administrator as found in the most recent notice of that address lodged with Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

2. Superannuation Choice...but there's a catch

Also commencing 1 January, a new law gives almost a million employees a choice of superannuation fund by removing limitations that forced them into a super fund dictated by their employer, but there is a catch! The changes are not retrospective and only apply to new agreements made on or after 1 January 2021.

According to the explanatory memorandum to the new legislation:

Any employee can choose their own super fund (including an SMSF) where they are employed under a workplace determination or enterprise agreement that is made on or after 1 January 2021.

*An employer does not have to provide existing employees with a superannuation choice form unless requested once a **new determination or agreement** is made. Where there is no chosen fund for an existing employee, an employer that continues to make compulsory contributions for that employee with the same fund, in accordance with the previous determination or agreement, will comply with the choice of fund requirements.*

Because the changes are not retrospective (they only apply to employees under new workplace agreements or determinations entered into on or after 1 January 2021), there are still some employees who do not get to choose their superannuation fund until such time as they come under a new agreement.

STP: Closely held payees – options for small employers

The ATO has released details of the three options that small employers with closely held payees will have for STP reporting purposes from 1 July 2021. Small employers (i.e. those with 19 or fewer employees) with closely held payees have been exempt from reporting these payees through STP for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years. However, they must commence from 1 July 2021.

By way of background, a closely held payee is an individual who is directly related to the entity from which they receive a payment, e.g. family members of a family business; directors or shareholders of a company; and beneficiaries of a trust.

There are three options provided by the ATO from 1 July 2021. That is, to report:

1. actual payments on or before the date of payment – i.e. whenever a small employer makes a payment to a closely held payee, report the information on or before each pay event

continued

- actual payments quarterly – report actual payments to closely held payees quarterly. In other words, each quarter, when the activity statement is due, report all payments made in that quarter, or
- a reasonable estimate quarterly – report amounts equal to or greater than a percentage of gross payments and tax withheld from the latest year, across each quarter. There are various safe harbour provisos relating to failure to withhold penalties.

Dividend imputation demystified

According to our [Bookkeeping Benchmark Report](#), more than a quarter of our ABN members operate through a company structure – and no doubt many of your clients do too. To this end, our recent [Bookkeeper Radio](#) episode covered off on the main bookkeeping issues around companies. It also provided a quite brilliant simple example of an issue that many shareholders of companies struggle to get their heads around – the dividend imputation system. Without an understanding of this topic, shareholders cannot fully grasp how they are actually taxed.

In the following example (based on the 2020 financial year tax rates), we've assumed that a taxpayer is on the 34.5% marginal tax rate (but you can substitute in any rate) and that the company is taxed at 27.5% as a base rate entity.

In step 1, you can see that company tax is being paid at 27.5%.

The example then assumes that all of the profits of the company are distributed to its shareholders (which is not compulsory – the company can retain these earnings)

DIVIDEND IMPUTATION DEMYSTIFIED

	Company	Shareholder
Tax Rate	27.50%	34.50%
	\$	\$
Taxable Income	100.00	
Tax @ 27.5%	27.50	27.50
Retained Earnings	72.50	
Paid to Shareholder	72.50	72.50
	Taxable Dividend	100.00
Total tax paid:		
By Company	27.50	
By Shareholder	7.00	
Total (= shareholder's tax rate)	34.50	
	Personal IT on Dividend	34.50
	Less Franking Credit	-27.50
	Net tax to shareholder	7.00

At step 2, the shareholder is paying tax at their marginal tax rate (including Medicare levy) on the dividends that they physically received. You can also see that a shareholder also pays tax on the tax the company paid – this essentially ensures the shareholder pays tax on the companies taxable income that provided the dividend.

Finally, the shareholder then gets a credit for the company tax already paid (an imputation credit) – it is this imputation credit that negates the company tax previously paid, thus ensuring that the profits earned by the company and distributed to shareholders are taxed only once. Imputation credits are refundable, therefore the shareholder still benefits in full from the credit even where it

exceeds their tax liability for the income year.

Check out this Members-only edition of [Bookkeeper Radio](#) on [our website](#).

CPE hours proposed to increase from 1 July 2021

The TPB has released a key continuing professional education (CPE) exposure draft:

- [Exposure Draft TPB\(EP\) D43/2021 Continuing professional education policy requirements for registered tax and BAS agents](#).

The key proposed changes are the increase in the minimum number of CPE hours to 120 hours over 3 years for all registered tax practitioners and the flexibility for practitioners to elect either a calendar or financial year basis for their 3-year CPE period. An amount of educative health and wellbeing activities is also proposed to count towards CPE.

Your Australian Bookkeepers Association will be making a submission on the exposure drafts (submissions due 11 March) and will publish our submission on our website. Some of the points we will be making include:

- The proposed increase in average CPE hours to 40 hours from 15 hours per annum is significant. This is the same CPE requirement applied to accountants which seems disproportionate given the narrower service offering of BAS Agents;
- A clearer definition of CPE is needed. Previously the board held the view that CPE need to be directly related to the BAS Services you provide. A wider definition of CPE would be easier to accommodate under an increase in the total number hours. Practice management, software, ethics, commercial law, state taxes and more should all be deemed relevant CPE when developing personal knowledge and skills and when operating a business of providing bookkeeping and BAS services. So we believe the definition should be more clearly articulated;
- The inclusion of educative health and wellbeing for up to 10% of the total CPE will be welcome for many. We are unsure as to whether this is a temporary inclusion and how that meets the definition of CPE previously articulated by the TPB;
- The proposed alignment of the “CPE year” to a financial or calendar year is welcome rather than the registration renewal year. It will assist in record keeping and CPE planning;
- The proposed retention of the unstructured component of CPE (including professional reading) at 25% is welcome. The requirement to better document the purpose of unstructured CPE also makes sense in terms of an overall plan for a well-structured approach to CPE.

IN 2021, YOU UPGRADED YOUR WEBSITE

By Alex Cumberland (Oncord)

Make 2021 the year you stopped being embarrassed by your old website. Your website can look great, it can help you attract new clients, and it doesn't have to cause a headache. This year I encourage you to strive for a modern, mobile friendly website that's easy for you to manage, with up-to-date content.

Why do Bookkeepers need a website?

- To build a positive impression of your brand.
- To help attract new clients and de-mystify your engagement process.
- To help retain existing clients, and to communicate important announcements and updates.

Fix Your Brand First

A website is a reflection of your brand and how you communicate. If your logo is looking dated, it's difficult to design a website that looks modern. Spending the time and money to update your logo before tackling the website is absolutely worthwhile and can totally transform your business. With your logo sorted, you're ready to start thinking about a website platform, and content.

Your Home Page

On your home page, greet website visitors with a big, clear value statement. A value statement is a short sentence that communicates your value, describing what you do, who you work with, and why you're different.

Below the value statement, provide a short preview of your Story, which leads new customers to your "About Us" page. The About Us page on websites is often neglected, but in our experience it's one of the most visited pages on your site.

Build a Services page, with a focus on the value you provide and your engagement process. Going into more detail about your services can also help improve the likelihood that you'll be found in search. List your recent blog / news updates, and finish with a call-to-action.

The call-to-action is the main action that you'd like visitors to do on your site. This might be a link to your contact form, or a link to a calendar system to book an initial consult.

A Web Designer vs. DIY

When I started in digital, website platforms were clunky, unintuitive, and not something that I could expect bookkeepers to operate. Fast forward 10 years, and platforms like Oncord make it easy for you to manage the website yourself. If your budget is limited and you enjoy learning new technology, you'll likely be able to build a website yourself. Otherwise, hire a web designer to create a professional website for you. Most of our bookkeeper clients prefer this approach, as web designers often include one-on-one training to make sure you're comfortable, and in control of your site.

Next Steps

After sorting your new website, never stop iterating and improving:

- Grow a contact database that you own.
- Get into a routine for publishing news, reviews and updates to attract visitors and wow clients.
- Sell training products and resources via the website.



THE ONCORD STORY

Oncord is a single platform for running your entire online business. Back in 2011, Oncord founder Scott McNaught was working as a freelance web designer. The industry standard was software for managing a website (primarily WordPress), with separate applications for ecommerce and running an email campaign, and a disconnected contact database sitting in an excel spreadsheet. It was a fragmented set of systems that wasn't ideal for clients to manage themselves, so Scott set out to re-write his own set of tools to combine all these requirements in one central platform.

We never liked the idea that a website platform needs to sit behind a developer when changes are required. So the system is designed to be operated by everyday business owners. It's easy to manage pages, post blog articles, send email campaigns and sell online.

Being well optimized for search engines, Oncord was a favorite for accounting firms looking to boost visibility online. Our popularity among accounting firms and bookkeepers led to our first integration with Xero, followed shortly by MYOB. Integrating Oncord with accounting software meant contacts would sync two-way, keeping details updated in both platforms. It also allowed targeted email and sms marketing based on invoices.

In 2021, Oncord serves customers across 13 countries from our headquarters located in Brisbane. Keep an eye out for our upcoming update, where we'll release a QuickBooks integration, along with some improved tools for building website forms.

Oncord and ABN

Oncord has helped a large handful of ABN members with websites over the years. In 2020 as part of a Bookkeeper radio session we ran a website and training package giveaway to help members overhaul their online presence. As part of that giveaway, we recently launched the following ABN Member websites (check them out) as we could help you create a site like this for a lot less money than you might expect:

- Elevate365.com.au
- savvyledgers.com.au
- allfiguredout.com.au
- rescuebooks.com.au
- brilliantadmin.com.au

If you've visited our website or social media pages, chances are that you've also seen our video case study featuring ABN member Cassandra Scott from Laurus Bookkeeping. Cassandra wasn't happy with the way her WordPress website represented her business but was struggling to find the time to upgrade. With a new Oncord powered website, she's had plenty of positive feedback: "Clients come back to us saying they really loved our website. With so much information available, it cuts down the sales pitch that we deliver in an initial meeting, and we can instead focus on how we can solve their problems."

FIVE MINUTES WITH...

Melanie Godsell



Business Name
Up2Date Administration

Location
Perth, WA

Provided ABN Member Since
2017

Favourite ABN Service

Pillars of Public Practice - plenty of resources and templates

Let's Start with a personal introduction - tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm very happily married with two fantastic children and a lovely ageing Labrador dog. I live in a suburb called The Vines which is also a golf course resort located in the beautiful Swan Valley. I enjoy a good book, outdoor activities and socialising with my family and great friends. Family, good health, a quality happy lifestyle and travel are my top priorities. I enjoy my business and pride myself on delivering attention to detail and business best practice to my quality customer base. As well as working fulltime, I am currently studying for Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) parttime.

How did you get started in the bookkeeping industry?

A long time ago.....

It seemed a good idea to be able to juggle flexible hours with young children.

Tell us about your bookkeeping practice. What services do you offer, what

is the industry like in your area, etc.

Up2Date Administration offers a wide range of services underpinned by our business methodology and staff doing the extra one percenters inclusive of work outside of normal business hours. Services include but are not limited to: accounts payable/receivable, bank reconciliations, reporting BAS, WET, TPAR, payroll and superannuation.

Up2Date Admin is the first point of call with regards to any matters relating to cash flow, income/expenditure and understating of their financial position. We work closely with outside accountants to ensure that systems, processing and reporting are accurate and valid.

Qualified Staff with BAS registration we currently fulfil all TPB requirements.

What is your opinion on the growth of the bookkeeping profession? How has it changed since you first started bookkeeping?

Bookkeeping is a service that every business needs and I believe it has become more professional since I commenced in the industry. With BAS Registration, support from professional bodies such as ABN and an understanding of business compliance we can offer a valued service that is also appreciated by a good accountant.

What makes you passionate

about bookkeeping?

The variety of clients and the different business services and products they offer, the different management styles and expectations. The opportunity to learn new skills and software that might be required, all keep us from getting stale.

What have you gained from your ABN membership?

Support. The vast array of material on the portal of course. But also the ability to contact ABN when you run into a brick wall. Through Coffee Club I have met the most amazing people, where we help each other every time.

Do have any marketing tips or tricks you would like to share?

No marketing tips as such, just good service, good relationships and word of mouth. I have several long-term clients of over 10+ years.

What have you gained from your ABN membership?

Knowledge, confidence and the comradery via the Coffee Club meetings

Tell us what Coffee Clubs are about for you. And, as a network leader, how do you prepare for your meetings?

We have a small Coffee Club group with some talented and knowledgeable people that are happy to share their experiences and listen to the concerns of others.

I plan the agenda with an idea of topics that may be of interest but this can be put aside, or covered quickly if a member has an issue or concern that needs some assistance/options that can take priority.

What advice can you give other leaders about managing Coffee Clubs?

Just be friendly, approachable and do your best. It might be out of your comfort zone and you may not be an expert but we can all grow and learn together with mutual support.

What essential advice do you have for other bookkeepers?

Decide if you want to invest time and develop long term relationships with business owners including an understanding of their business, their staff and their system or if you want to keep everything strictly numbers and procedures. Up2Date Admin is the former and we believe this has resulted in a low turnover of clients

What made you become an ABN Network Leader and Why would you recommend it to others?

It was by default, I was available, and the last leader was time poor, it just really happened by accident but I am glad it did. It has been a great opportunity to meet local likeminded bookies who want to help and support each other.